

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8754

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, SG, AFSP

SUBJECT: SENEGALESE EMBASSY REQUEST FOR U.S. REGULATIONS
ON DIPLOMATIC IMPORTS

REF A STATE 61795, B DAKAR 7759

1. REFTEL A REPORTED REQUEST BY SENEGALESE AMBASSADOR
COULBARY FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. REGULATIONS ON
DUTY FREE ENTRY OF IMPORTS FOR DIPLOMATIC AS WELLAS
ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL PERSONNEL. HIS REQUEST
PROBABLY IS RELATED TO DIFFICULTIES BEING EXPERIENCED
BY MANY DIPLOMAITC MISSIONS IN SENEGAL AND EFFORTS OF
SOME MISSIONS, INCLUDING OURS, TO RECTIFY SITUATION.

2. DURING PAST YEAR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS HERE HAVE
HAD GROWING DIFFICULTIES OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR DUTY
FREE ENTRY OF GOODS. THIS HAS CAUSED HEAVIER ADMINI-
STRATIVE WORKLOAD AND LONG DELAYS. AT LEAST ONE REASON
FOR DIFFICULTIES APPARENTLY IS DESIRE OF GOS TO INCREASE
THEIR REVENUES. RECENT SCANDALS IN CUSTOMS SERVICE
(REF B) HAVE ALSO DRAWN PUBLIC ATTENTION TO
WEAKNESS OF CUSTOMS PROCEDURES AND HAS RESULTED IN
STIFFER CONTROLS BEING IMPOSED BY CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES.

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3. DIFFICULTIES FOR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS INITIALLY
MANIFESTED THEMSELVES AS GOS DEMANDS FOR MORE COMPLETE
INFORMATION ON EACH REQUEST FOR DUTY FREE ENTRY. FOR
EXAMPLE, WE HAVE BEEN ASKED IN SEVERAL INSTANCES TO
SUPPLY NAMES OF USERS, SERIAL NUMBERS, MANUFACTURER,
AND ORIGINAL PURCHASE PRICES OF ITEMS (SUCH AS STOVES
AND REFRIGERATORS) BEING REPLACED. DELAYS OF 60 TO 90

DAYS IN RECEIVING PERMISSION WERE COMMON FOR DUTY FREE ENTRY OF GOODS. IN DECEMBER 1976, CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES RESCINDED PRIVILEGE PREVIOUSLY ENJOYED BY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OF TAKING POSSESSION OF GOODS PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF APPROVED EXONERATIONS. AS RESULT, STORAGE COSTS, WHICH ACCRUE TO GOS, WERE BEING CHARGED.

4. DIFFICULTIES FOR THIS MISSION CULMINATED ON FEBRUARY 25 WHEN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES REFUSED OUR REQUEST FOR DUTY FREE ENTRY OF SHIPMENT OF FIFTY-FIVE AIR CONDITIONERS AND NOTIFIED US THAT THIS QUANTITY WAS UNREASONABLE. FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THIS REFUSAL AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED ENTIRE RANGE OF CUSTOMS DIFFICULTIES WITH MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE AND LATER WITH DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS. DURING DISCUSSIONS AMBASSADOR STATED THAT AS RESULT OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS MISSION HAD INCREASING DIFFICULTY MEETING NEEDS OF ITS PERSONNEL; HE SAID USG HAD RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPLY FURNISHED QUARTERS TO ALL DIRECT HIRE EMPLOYEES AND WAS CONCERNED THAT LONG DELAYS IN RECEIVING EXONERATIONS MIGHT DELAY COMPLETION OF NEW CHANCERY. HE ASSURED BOTH MINISTER OF STATE AND DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMS THAT AMOUNT OF MATERIAL BEING IMPORTED WAS REFLECTION OF GROWING IMPORTANCE OF USSENEGALESE RELATIONS. AMBASSADOR ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ONLY 19 MEMBERS OF MISSION (OUT OF TOTAL OF 67 DIRECT HIRE USG EMPLOYEES IN SENEGAL) WERE ON THE DIPLOMATIC LIST. AS USG HAD MORE-OR-LESS EQUAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO ITS EMPLOYEES, BE THEY DIPLOMATIC OR ADMINISTRATIVE OR TECHNICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PERSONNEL, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO JUSTIFY ANY MAJOR DIFFERENCE IN HOUSING FURNISHINGS, FOR EXAMPLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WHO MIGHT BE IN SECOND CATEGORY. THESE DISCUSSIONS INCLUDED REVIEW OF USG ASSISTANCE TO SENEGAL FUNDED BY AID. SUBSEQUENTLY CUSTOMS OFFICER INDICATED TO EMBOFF THAT VALUE OF DUTY OF U.S. EMBASSY IMPORTS (AND LOST TO GOS REVENUES) FOR FISCAL YEAR 1976 WAS IN EXCESS OF 160,000 DOLLARS.

5. AS RESULT OF AMBASSADOR'S MEETINGS WITH FINANCE MINISTER AND CUSTOMS DIRECTOR, GOS NOW HAS CLEARED ALL MAJOR OUTSTANDING EXONERATION REQUESTS, AND THERE HAS BEEN MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN ATTITUDE OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS TOWARD MISSION. AVERAGE TIME FOR CLEARANCE PROCEDURE HAS BEEN REDUCED TO A MANAGEABLE ONE TO TWO - WEEK PERIOD.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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